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The Big Chill

The Refrigeration Revolution

Life changed for everyone in the early 1900s as home refrigerators were introduced in the Midwest. Two of the first home refrigerators were produced in 1911 in Indiana, followed by the first introduction of two dozen refrigerators to the U.S. Market in 1915.

Compressors in these units were often driven by a motor located in an adjacent room, or even a basement! A model in 1922 had a wooden cabinet, water-cooled compressor, and two ice cube trays in a whole nine cubic feet of storage space. This is a far cry from refrigeration today!

Modern refrigerators began mass production following



Designer finish: Jenn-Air introduces their new oil-rubbed bronze finish in the French door refrigerator above.

World War II, and today they reside in 99.5% of American homes. Refrigeration has revolutionized the home, both technologically and visually—offering a convenience that aids everyday life.

Refrigerators are designed in many configurations—from traditional freezer on top/refrigerator bottom and side by side, to freezer on the bottom and all refrigeration and all freezer. Undercounter, freestanding and built-in options add more choice to the refrigerator models. These refrigerators offer increased space over their free-standing counterparts and can come in much wider dimensions. Many built-ins can be designed with cabinet overlays to create a seamless look in the kitchen. Some offer glass doors with interior lights for a more modern look.

Freestanding refrigeration includes the ever popular counter-depth models. These refrigerators are about 4" shallower than traditional stand alone models; the cabinet of the refrigerator is generally flush with the counter and bottom cabinets. These models provide a built-in look without a complete remodel of your kitchen.

Undercounter refrigeration has grown in popularity in the



This Architect II Series refrigerator by KitchenAid shows a French-door bottom mount freezer and is available in Built-In or Freestanding styles.

past decade. Undercounter products include refrigerator drawers, wine units, beverage centers, and even ice makers. Many manufacturers are creating these options for people with a need for a bar or beverage area in their home. These units offer convenience and sleek designs to spice up that entertaining area, inside or out!

Exciting technological advancements have been incorporated into refrigeration—such as water dispensers with filtered, purified water. Refrigerators with digital readouts and a water measuring feature have made their way into the marketplace. Some manufacturers are using dual compressors to

keep the temperature constant, others use multiple digital thermostats. There are refrigerators with customizable drawers that offer temperature adjustments to only that portion of the interior. Freezers in the refrigerators have advanced as well, offering ice storage in the door to free up space in the cabinet.

Appliances in the kitchen have certainly changed since the early 1900s. The refrigerator has become a prominent piece in homes as both a necessity and a fashionable accessory. Please view the comparison chart on page 6-11 and manufacturer specifications on a variety of refrigerators.

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